

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

FEBRUARY 2003



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Unemployment increases reflect seasonal changes

Unemployment in Northwest Wisconsin increased from December to January as more residents lost jobs. The majority of reductions resulted from seasonal fluctuations in employment and was typical for the time of year.

The unemployment rate in the region rose from 6.7 percent in December to 8.3 percent in January. Even with the recent increase the current rate remains lower than the 9.0 percent rate of one year ago. (Note: all estimates previously released for 2002 have been revised.) State and national unemployment rates also rose during the month. The Wisconsin unemployment rate, not seasonally adjusted, increased from 4.9 to 6.3 percent while the national rate rose from 5.7 to 6.5 percent. Seasonally adjusted the state unemployment rate in January was 5.4 percent and the national rate was 5.7 percent. Nationally, the February estimates have already been released and revealed a rise in unemployment to 5.8 percent.

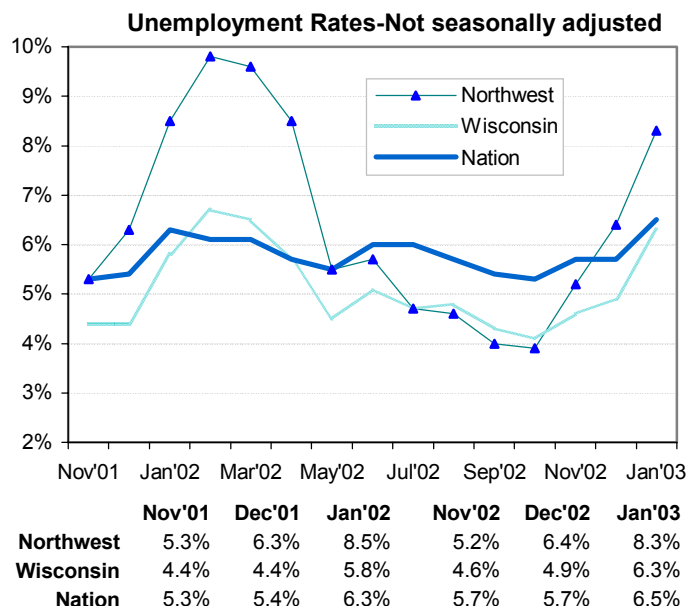
All but one of Wisconsin's 72 counties posted an increase in unemployment rate in January. The unemployment rates in Washburn and Sawyer counties rose 2.1 percentage points, ranking them among the ten counties with the largest increases. In both counties a significant share of the claims filed for unemployment benefits were from tourism related jobs.

Other northwest counties also experienced a rise in unemployment claims from retail trade and services industry employers but these claims were outnumbered by claims from construction and manufacturing workers.

There is typically a rise in unemployment in January

that will continue through March. Even though the number of residents out of work and looking for a job rose from 6,250 in December to 7,930 there were fewer unemployed in 2003 than one year earlier. It should be noted that the revised estimates for 2002 resulted in higher estimates for the number of unemployed, and unemployment rates, in all northwest counties.

As sometimes happens during the year, the changes in total employment in the labor force do not reflect similar changes in the nonfarm wage and salary employment estimates. That happened in January. On the labor force side there was an increase of 800 in the number of employed during the month



Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin counties: Current month - January, 2003

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02
Civilian labor force	8,604	8,099	8,050	7,851	7,736	7,521	7,905	7,181	7,157	23,558	23,253	23,249	3,484	3,427	3,670
Employed	7,767	7,456	7,140	7,102	7,133	6,832	7,354	6,742	6,547	21,913	22,091	21,566	3,160	3,160	3,361
Unemployed	837	643	910	749	603	689	551	439	610	1,645	1,162	1,683	324	267	309
% unemployed	9.7	7.9	11.3	9.5	7.8	9.2	7.0	6.1	8.5	7.0	5.0	7.2	9.3	7.8	8.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02
Civilian labor force	7,370	6,903	6,953	7,329	7,220	7,316	10,425	10,344	9,987	10,936	11,017	10,884	8,175	8,080	7,983
Employed	6,825	6,537	6,469	6,658	6,707	6,630	9,520	9,692	9,190	10,035	10,308	9,954	7,371	7,497	7,212
Unemployed	545	366	484	671	513	686	905	652	797	901	709	930	804	583	771
% unemployed	7.4	5.3	7.0	9	7.1	9.4	8.7	6.3	8.0	8.2	6.4	8.5	9.8	7.2	9.7

Industry Employment Estimates: Current month - January 2003

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02
Total Nonfarm	8,770	9,143	8,558	3,745	3,893	3,598	4,901	4,989	4,644	17,470	18,196	17,598	2,308	2,275	2,311
Const/Min'g/Nat.	415	469	382	217	225	203	238	270	213	791	908	806	224	248	259
Manufacturing	1,159	1,238	1,202	125	140	134	962	978	964	1,271	1,148	1,275	407	424	373
Trade	1,042	1,074	1,055	352	365	424	580	613	542	3,091	3,215	3,062	352	362	376
Transportation & Utilities	242	241	239	133	148	115	112	103	101	2,128	2,190	2,128	50	47	46
Financial Activities	349	354	342	144	143	142	144	150	150	495	491	478	97	81	74
Education & Health Service	1,880	1,849	1,811	286	305	264	618	603	552	1,720	1,778	1,869	304	304	285
Leisure & Hospitality	934	994	844	960	950	759	586	587	522	2,165	2,242	2,058	436	352	381
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr	503	668	684	194	261	249	200	295	291	2,740	2,920	2,864	101	107	110
Total Government	2,246	2,256	2,000	1,334	1,355	1,307	1,461	1,391	1,308	3,069	3,304	3,058	337	350	407
	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02	Jan '03	Dec '02	Jan '02
Total Nonfarm	6,579	6,608	6,445	5,958	6,027	5,735	6,662	7,117	6,760	8,869	9,047	8,684	5,766	5,960	5,774
Resources	221	258	233	303	337	163	342	370	332	206	272	282	225	282	247
Manufacturing	2,511	2,560	2,338	2,076	2,096	2,081	598	566	497	2,833	2,836	2,727	1,058	1,059	1,022
Trade	731	737	758	591	587	561	1,188	1,149	1,285	1,370	1,414	1,384	871	875	888
Transportation & Utilities	93	93	86	159	167	152	97	101	138	422	439	457	171	184	177
Financial Activities	225	217	208	134	135	131	329	334	325	323	309	341	212	217	215
Education & Health Service	797	805	838	436	428	502	684	735	707	1,112	1,088	1,060	858	844	831
Leisure & Hospitality	396	375	311	368	365	337	949	1,177	774	520	568	529	602	672	573
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv	592	521	619	565	569	458	561	712	752	1,007	1,015	871	359	374	361
Total Government	1,013	1,042	1,054	1,326	1,344	1,350	1,914	1,973	1,949	1,076	1,107	1,033	1,410	1,453	1,460

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2002 benchmark.

from 86,900 in December to 87,700 in January, while the wage and salary estimates declined by 2,200 jobs.

The total number of jobs with employers in Northwest Wisconsin declined from December to January and construction employers sustained some of the greatest reductions. Construction jobs dropped from 3,640 in December to 3,180 in January as they do every year. Of note, however is that the number of construction jobs in the area this January is still slightly higher than one year ago.

The greatest loss of jobs over the year, however, occurred from employers in a new conglomerate sector under the North American Classification System (NAICS) called information, professional and business services, and other services. Each of these is a separate sector in NAICS but because of the size of small rural counties, could not be published individually. Included in this conglomerate, and the primary reasons for the decline in jobs in January, are telemarketing and landscaping services.

Another new conglomerate, leisure and hospitality services, includes restaurants, resorts and amusements. There were roughly 7,900 jobs in this sector in January, nearly 370 fewer than there were in December. Many of the counties in the area showed a loss of

jobs, but not Iron County. This loss reflects some seasonal activity following the holidays but is greater this year due to the lack of snow in the area. However, because of job gains over the last twelve months, the current estimate in most counties remains higher than one year ago. The current weather condition also effect the number of jobs in trade, especially wholesale trade, where businesses supply area restaurants and bars with food and beverages.

The number of new claims filed for unemployment compensation benefits reflect the job reductions from employers including those in trade and services. The number of claims filed by workers from these industries increased during the month of January. However, over 60 percent of the unemployment claims were from construction and production workers.

The total number of continued claims filed for benefits remains at the highest level in the last ten years and, based on the number of new claims filed since mid-January, this will not decline in the near future. February and March are historically the months with the most residents claiming unemployment benefits. The highest unemployment rates of the year also occur in one of these two months.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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